The Field Museum

Natural News

Weekly Staff Newsletter
December 22, 2000

Rieppel Named Geology Chair

It is with great pleasure that The Museum announces the appointment of Dr. Olivier Rieppel as the next Chair of the Geology Department. Olivier will take over at the (true) beginning of the new millennium (January 1, 2001) from John Flynn when he completes his second four-year term at the end of 2000.

Dr. Rieppel is widely recognized as a leading expert in the evolution of the major groups of reptiles, both fossil and extinct. His outstanding book *Fundamentals of Comparative Biology* (1988) quickly established his status as a leader in systematic theory and methods, complemented by a rigorous empirical approach to incorporating detailed studies of anatomy and developmental biology in undertanding the evolution and biogeography of many different reptile groups. His work addresses the role of miniaturization in the evolution of snakes, the surprising observation of the presence of legs in advanced snakes (bearing on questions of both snake ancestry and how developmental changes are constrained and regulated during evolution), the relationships of the major groups of reptiles (including placement of turtles, widely believed to be "primitive" relative to other groups, well within the major radiation of "more advanced" diapsid reptiles), and the impact of plate tectonics and geographic changes on the biogeographic distribution of all the groups of marine reptiles ("armored" placodonts, dolphin-like ichtyosaurs, long-necked plesiosaurs, and lizard-relative mosasaurs).

Olivier received his Ph.D. in 1978, and his advanced "Habilitation" degree in 1984, both from the University of Basle. Beginning his academic career at the Paleontological Institute and Museum of the

(Continued on following page)

FIELD NOTES

Week December 26, 2000

Staff/Volunteer Events

NO Tae Bo
- Monday, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1

Aerobics Class
- Tuesday, 5 p.m., Ground Floor
- Thursday, 5 p.m., Ground Floor

Green Sheet Meeting
- Wednesday, 3 p.m., Special Events

2001Health and Benefits Fair
- Thursday, Jan. 4, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Siragusa Center

Public/Campus Events

Kremlin Gold
- Exhibit Continues

Endurance
- Exhibit continues

Star Wars: The Magic of Myth
- Exhibit continues until Jan. 7

The Natural News is published by the Human Resources Departmen

The deadline for next week's issue is Wednesday, December 27, at noon.

(*Rieppel*, continued)

University of Zurich, he joined The Field Museum in 1990 as Curator of Fossil Reptiles and Amphibians. He then left to serve briefly as Director of the Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde in Stuttgart, Germany, before The Field Museum tempted him back to the Geology Department curatorial staff in 1996. He has been elected a Foreign Member of the Linnean Society, has served on numerous Editorial Boards, is active in teaching and graduate advising at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago, and has been one of the most productive writers on the Museum staff with more than 150 scientific papers and books, and some 50 other papers on philosophy of science. His work is regularly published in such prestigious journals as *Science*, *Nature*, *Journal of the Zoological Society* (London), *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, and numerous others. Olivier's research since coming to the Field Museum has been supported by four *National Geographic* and *three* major National Science Foundation grants.

We are proud and excited to have Olivier at the helm of our outstanding Geology Department as we move forward with the Museum's ambitious plans to enhance research, collections, and public programs.

Former Education Department Staff Member Remembered

Some sad news to report this week. Former Education Department employee, **Edith Fleming** passed away Wednesday morning, December 20, 2000. Edith began at the Museum in 1951 as a tour guide for school groups in what was then called the Raymond Foundation. When the Education Department was formed in the 1960's, Edith and other Raymond Foundation staff formed the core of the school programs division. Edith developed guided tours in all of the anthropology related exhibits over the years, conducting thousands of tours herself and training hundreds of volunteers. She retired from the Museum in 1987 and she is fondly remembered by all of those who had the opportunity to work with her.

A memorial service will be scheduled next week at Grace Episcopal Church in Oak Park.

New Supervisor in Guest Relations

I am pleased to announce the hiring of **Ces Lopez** as a Guest Relations Supervisor. Ces was raised in Texas and attended Texas A&M University. He lived in New York City for three years and then moved to Chicago. He has been in the hotel business since 1981 having worked as a Front Desk, Reservations, Restaurant and Guest Services Manager as well as Director of Housekeeping in Human Resources.

Ces is an avid tennis player, reader and painter. He also writes poetry and short stories. Two of his favorite books are *Martin Eden* by Jack London and *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. Both are stories about the human condition and the will to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds. Ces has been married to Jean Shorter, an author, and they recently celebrated their seventh anniversary. She shares his love of poetry and music.

Submitted by **Dianne White**

Save the Date

2001 Health and Benefits Fair—Thursday, January 4, 2001. Siragusa Center, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Over 20 Information booths!! Bigger and Better Than Ever!!

Field Museum Volunteer named Rhodes Scholar

Rudyard Sadleir, an undergraduate at UIC studying paleontology and environmental geology and a volunteer for the Geology & Education departments at the Field Museum, was recently named a Rhodes Scholar.

He is the first ever Rhodes Scholar at UIC, and according to his quote in the *Chicago Sun Times*, he hopes it will lead to more opportunities in paleontology. "You live on a shoestring and it's very grueling, very difficult, but you have a fantastic time," Sadleir said.

Submitted by **Carter O'Brien**

Feinman reports from China

Gary Feinman, Curator and Chair, Anthroplogy, is in Rizhao, Shandong, China continuing the joint Field Museum-Shandong University archaeological settlement pattern survey there. The Field Museum-Shandong University excavations this fall (led by Assistant Curator **Anne Underhill**) were very successful, turning up dozens of house foundations (mostly partial) from the Longshan period (ca.2600-2000 BC) at the site of Liangchengzhen. They may have exposed as many as five superimposed building episodes during the excavations. Excavations to expose the ditch or moat that ringed the core of this site are continuing under the direction of one of the Chinese professors. Both the survey and the excavation are funded by the National Science Foundation and The Field Museum.

Feinman, Underhill, Adjunct Curator, **Linda Nicholas**, and two Chinese archaeologists began the regional study this season by resurveying the outskirts of Liangchengzhen to refine our dating of these outlying parts of the site (see Anne and Gary surveying near a Han tomb at that site). Last Tuesday. they began systematically to cover new areas to the south of Liangchengzhen, expanding the 400-square-kilometer survey region that they have studied over five previous seasons. In less than a week, they have found several large post-Longshan sites (Zhou and Han) as well as some smaller sites from the Longshan period (see Gary collecting surface artifacts at Zhou settlement, Tao Jia Cun-1, and surveying recently recorded Han tomb at Miao Jia Cun-1).

Sue's News

Natural News has learned that Chicago's WMAQ-TV (Channel 5) conducting an online vote to determine the top 5 news stories of the year 2000. One of the categories is Person of the Year. Our own **Sue the Dinosaur** is moving right along at the top of the list, with Mayor Daley somewhere behind her. Sue is receiving 28% of the online votes. Hmm...interesting. You know, if *we* all voted too... Excuse me, I have to sneeze,...ah,.. ah,.. Ah–(vote at **nbc5.com**!!) Whew! That's better.

And Now, the *Natural News* Holiday Business Report...

Elves Downsized at North Pole: Labor Turmoil Builds as High Tech Workers Imported from Sweden.

CHRISTMASTOWN, NP—Elves returned to the picket lines today after talks faltered with the North Pole's largest employer, SantaCorp. Waving signs and shaking their tiny fists in the air, the elves decried what they maintain is a major threat to their job security—thousands of technically-skilled workers from neighboring Sweden. Since 1998, when SantaCorp, began to import workers from the Scandinavian country, elfin unemployment has nearly tripled to 15 percent.

SantaCorp maintains that rising holiday demand for high-tech toys and other consumer electronics, such video consoles, DVD players, stereos and computers, has necessitated a major readjustment in the North Pole labor market. "We live in a wired world," SantaCorp spokesperson Roberta Peary-Fältskog said Thursday. "This is about supply and demand, and about competition in the marketplace. Not only do we have to compete with the huge mega-electronics chains, but the number of potential customers on the "nice list" has declined in recent years." According to Peary-Fältskog, SantaCorp must be able to offer the latest popular high-tech items for Christmas in order to maintain a respectable market share. "As a whole, the elves are not known for having these kinds of skills, and so we have had to bring in workers with the appropriate abilities."

Traditionally, elves hand-manufactured quaint but uncomplicated toys such as wooden toy trains, rocking horses and dolls. But the chief negotiator for the elf union, Mirvin the elf, dismissed Peary-Fältskog's characterization of the dispute. "SantaCorp has refused all of our requests to institute job training programs at their main workshop. Given the right training, we could just as easily meet the demand for high-tech presents ourselves without having to pay inflated salaries to workers from abroad."

SantaCorp and its growing Swedish labor force continues to defend its changes and offers attractive inducements to Swedish workers such as higher pay and bright, sunny workrooms appointed with sleek furnishings from IKEA. "In our workshop," Mirvin the elf grumbled, "we're surrounded by gray walls and we all work at a great big bench." The elves are also pressing demands for better wages and improved work environments.

Looking out over the sea of pointy green hats gathered in front of the workshop, Mirvin the elf declared, "Management never gave us a chance to prove our worth. But now that we are organized, my brothers and sisters, our squeaky little voices shall be heard!" which drew uproarious, high-pitched cheers from the crowd. Several angry workers in attendance voiced their complaints, like an elf named Hardrock, who said "We're tired of always getting the short end of the stick!" His comrade, an elf named Cocoa, incited the crowd to chant, "We're mad as elf, and we're not going to take it anymore!" Another elf, by the name of Joe, said simply, "I'm Joe."

Already, a few anonymous dissenters within SantaCorp are expressing concern over the effects of a prolonged strike. Despite having the employees on hand to handle the high-tech toy requests, a significant portion of SantaCorp's product line is still manufactured by elf labor—a fact that represents critical leverage in their cause. Production in the workshops' Simple Toy division has come to a standstill. "This really hurts us, especially at this time of year" an anonymous worker said. "Sure, a lot of modern, hip kids with names like Britanny or Luke are fueling a demand for the high-tech toys. But there still a lot of old

fashioned children out there with names like little Tommy or little Sally who'd love a wooden toy soldier or a curly-headed dolly."

Meanwhile, outside, on the picket line, several downsized and downcast elves contemplated their futures after SantaCorp. One elf who recently lost his job as a little-red-wagon painter asked, "What am I supposed to do now? It's not like I can just go get a job on Wall Street or anything. I had an offer from a big snack company to make cookies, but then my whole family and I would have to move into that stupid tree."

Many elves make ends meet by crafting and hanging decorations around Christmastown. But even in this traditional elfin labor niche, they face competition from the woodland creatures. Gleeful gangs of rabbits, squirrels and chipmonks who can lithely scamper to the tops of houses holding long strings of garland in their mouths and hang ornaments on even the tallest trees represent a serious challenge to traditional elf dominance in the Christmas decorations industry. However, in a vote that could give new life to the elf labor movement, Woodland Creature Local Union League 104 will ask its members on Saturday to agree to a sympathy strike.

The *Natural News* business report will keep you updated on developments.

Sometimes people send us jokes, like this letter from a staff member in the Education Department.

I heard a cute joke over the weekend that I thought you might enjoy and use.

A visitor asked a museum guard how old the (Sue) dinosaur skeleton was. The guard replied that it was 67 million years and 7 months old. The visitor asked how they could determine it so finely down to the month.

The guard replied that the skeleton was 67 million years old when he started working at the museum and that he had been there seven months!

Baker's Corner

Paul Baker

Close on the heels of one eat-fest comes another: the winter holidays. Some of us still have frozen turkey shards and withered cranberry relish crusts in the refrigerator. We prevailed last month and we can do it again.

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hannukah, Kwanzaa, Ramadan or some other special feast-laden ritual, be of good cheer. This period of the solar calendar usually means lots of cookies stamped out in effigies of mythical figures or characters from an old popular winter song. Candy is big as a gift, snack food, appetizer, main dish or dessert. Luckily, there are other presents to distract even the most sugar-mad among us.

Christmas celebrates the birth of an unusual male child. My mother, in a fit of *Christmas Carol* fervor, used to make plum pudding for an after-dinner treat. I only remember there were lots of pieces of candied fruit, some walnuts and a

(See Baker, page 6)

sticky doughy mixture steaming in a strange mini-Turkish bath of some sort. No plums. I licked the white sauce off and called myself lucky. Bad taste and bad texture suffused the sodden mass.

Hanukah, or Chanukah, started yesterday. It is called the Festival of Lights and celebrates the victory of the Maccabees or Israelites over the Greek-Syrian ruler, Antiochus about 2200 years ago. To mark this special time, menorahs are lit and families enjoy traditional Hanukah foods such as latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiot (jelly donuts), or other foods which are fried in oil, to celebrate and commemorate the miracle of the oil lamp which burned for eight days.

Kwanzaa claims no ties with any religion and is quite new, having been devised in the 1960's by Maulana Karenga. The word kwanzaa means "first fruits" in Swahili. This is a perfect festival for foods: sweet potato pies, vegetarian stews, squash and yams, tomato/avocado/buttermilk soup, benne cakes, fritters and southern-fried-anything (hold the okra!). On the penultimate day, December 31st, there is a feast, the Kwanzaa Kuramu, which is celebrated not only with large amounts of food, but also with speeches and music designed to focus everyone on ancestors and black culture.

Ramadan falls at this time, this year, and is a special month of the Islamic lunar calendar for over one billion Muslims throughout the world. It is a time for inner reflection, devotion to God, and self-control. Muslims think of it as a kind of tune-up for their spiritual lives. There are as many meanings of Ramadan as there are Muslims. It is a time of fasting and intense worship. A daily period of fasting starts at the breaking of dawn and ends at the setting of the sun. The usual practice is to have a pre-fast meal (suhoor) before dawn and a post-fast meal (iftar) after sunset. Foods have a special meaning at this time and may include dates, coffee with milk, figs, hard-boiled eggs, a variety of cakes and pancakes, and the soup Harira, along with many chicken and lamb dishes.

For this Christmas, as with most others, I'll be in Dubuque, the vast food-wasteland. My sister will make some traditional (traditional here meaning Iowa-belief-system-based) dishes to appease my brother-in-law and some recipes from popular magazines. Unfortunately, most of these media formulas call for ingredients foreign to small towns west of the Mississippi, requiring me to gather the ingredients and bear them with me to the fertile flood plain.

No matter your lot this season, I wish you holi-days like this:

"When the girl returned, some hours later, she carried a tray, with a cup of fragrant tea steaming on it; and a plate piled up with very hot buttered toast, cut thick, very brown on both sides, with the butter running through the holes in it in great golden drops, like honey from the honeycomb. The smell of that buttered toast simply talked to Toad, and with no uncertain voice; talked of warm kitchens, of breakfasts on bright frosty mornings, of cosy parlour firesides on winter evenings, when one's ramble was over and slippered feet were propped on the fender, of the purring of contented cats, and the twitter of sleepy canaries."

— From *The Wind in the Willows*, by Kenneth Grahame.

Make your loved ones laugh this holiday season. Tell a joke. Relate a funny story. Or, just make a goofy face. And, from the *Natural News*, have a perfectly silly holiday!

CLASSICAL ART SOCIETY

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO • 111 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60603-6110 • 312-443-3697

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OORDINATOR

December 19, 2000

Dear Mr. McCarter,

Before the year slips away, I want to thank you for the wonderful visit we, the Classical Art Society, had on December 5th, touring the Etruscan storage galleries with Amanda Worzak. We had fifty four members; Amanda was so kind to arrange to take them in four separate groups. Thanks to Richard DeRuma's lecture to us last year we knew about this wonderful collection, and Bud Blossom made the initial inquiries for us.

It was a pleasure to meet you and have you join us at 10:00 AM. My husband and I spent the day at the Field and enjoyed the two major exhibitions so much, we've decided to become members!

Again, many thanks!

Sincerely,

Bonnie Pritchard

The Field Museum

Nominate Someone Tod

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

This award will be given to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding performance or achievement. The *Award of Excellence* has been implemented to recognize individuals who have gone "above and beyond the call of duty," have demonstrated outstanding contribution to the mission of the Museum, or have added significant value to the visitor experience. A group of colleagues representing diverse areas of the Museum will review each nomination and determine which nominees will receive the award. The award will be presented during the Museum's Annual Recognition Ceremony.

Recipient Eligibility

The following is the criteria that will be used to determine if a staff member is eligible to receive an award:

- recipients must have been employed with the Museum for a minimum of one year by September 1st in the year for which the award is given
- recipients must be employed by the Museum on the day the award is to be presented
- recipients must not have been involved in any disciplinary action prior to or at the time of nomination or being awarded
- recipients must be nominated by another employee and selected by the award committee
- recipients cannot serve on the selection committee

Selection Criteria

- nominee must meet the aforementioned eligibility requirements
- all nominees will be given full consideration
- nominee must have been a participant or leader in an outstanding achievement, interaction, project, process, or act where they are clearly identified as a role-model
- performance must be significant in terms of its impact on the Museum's visitor, reputation, staff, volunteers, or mission
- nominee must not have been involved in any disciplinary action prior to or at the time of nomination
- facts stated in nomination must be verifiable
- Examples of outstanding performance may include, but are not limited to:
  - Specific examples of extraordinary visitor satisfaction
  - Groundbreaking scientific accomplishments
  - Improvement in a Museum process/program that has far reaching impact
  - Specific examples of colleagues supporting one another
  - First time/one time goals or challenges that have been met and set a precedent

Eligibility to Make a Nomination

- any current staff member (must be available to speak with the selection committee about the nomination if requested)
- nomination must be made for outstanding performance or achievement during the current year's eligibility time period

How and When to Make a Nomination

- make a nomination anytime you believe a co-worker, supervisor or supervisee deserves special recognition for a job well-done
- during the first year of this program, the nomination process will begin December 1, 2000 and continue through August 31, 2001. Subsequent years, the nomination period will be September 1, 2001 through August 31, 2002, and so on…
- nomination forms will be distributed throughout the Museum and should be sent to the Human Resources Department upon completion
- nomination forms will be available from department managers, the Human Resources Department, and will be available once per month in the Natural News.
- there are no limits on the number of times someone can be nominated

Selection Committee

An *Award of Excellence* selection committee will be established. The Human Resources Department will ask area Vice Presidents for nominations from their area to serve on the committee. The number of people sitting on the committee will reflect the maximum number of awards that could be given (13) along with representation from the Human Resources Department. The selection committee will meet once per month to discuss all nominations and potential award recipients. All nominations will receive an acknowledgement from the selection committee. Anyone who nominates another staff will be contacted to verify the facts of the nomination. If for any reason, the selection committee or human resources department deems that a nomination does not meet the nomination eligibility requirements, the person who made the nomination will be contacted. The awards will be presented in November, during the Annual Recognition Ceremony.

Maximum Number of Awards Being Granted*

Up to 13 awards may be granted in any given year; based on the number and merit of the nominations which will be determined by the selection committee.

Academic Affairs	3 awards
Information Services	1 award
Institutional Advancement	1 award
Museum Affairs	3 awards
Public Services	3 awards
Finance and Administration	2 awards

(also includes President's Office, Office of General Counsel, External Affairs, and Human Resources)

*based on number of people per Museum organizational Area

Any questions about the *Award of Excellence*, the selection criteria, process, nominations, recipients or committee should be directed to the Human Resources Department at ext. 7271.

2000
Award of Excellence
Nomination

The Field Museum

Staff Member Being Nominated:

Name _____

Department _____

Reason for Nomination (use reverse side if necessary) :

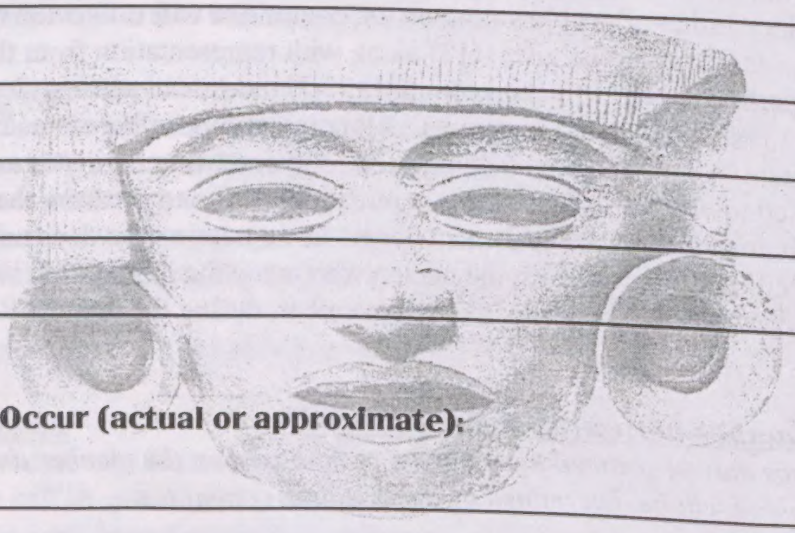
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____



When Did This Occur (actual or approximate):

_____

_____

Submitted By:

Name _____

Department _____

Telephone Extension _____

Signature _____ **Today's Date** _____

Return this form to the Human Resources Department anytime before September 1, 2001. If you have any questions, please call ext. 7271.